



London **Mission**

Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

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One Year On...

*High Commissioner Garvin Nicholas
completes one year in office*



October - December 2011 CONTENTS

LONDONMISSION

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High Commissioner Garvin Nicholas with cricketer Brian Lara, fashion designer Anya Ayoung-Chée and footballer Dwight Yorke at the World Travel Market 2011 in London's Excel Centre.

Read more on page 08

03 | One Year On...
High Commissioner
Garvin Nicholas

05 | Prime Minister
Kamla Persad-Bissessar
at the CHOGM 2011 in
Perth, Australia

07 | Trinidad and
Tobago and BGT
commit to future
growth.

08 | Trinidad and
Tobago shines at the
World Travel Market
Exhibition

CULTURE

11 | High
Commissioner
Celebrates
Eid-ul-Fitr with
Nationals in
London

11 | Divali
Celebrations
at THC



FRONT COVER:

Staff members of
Trinidad and Tobago
High Commission with
Prime Minister Kamla
Persad-Bissessar

SOCIAL MEDIA

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HIGH COMMISSION FOR
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ONE YEAR ON... HIGH COMMISSIONER GARVIN NICHOLAS

Photos and Montage: Darrin des Vignes



His Excellency Garvin Nicholas throughout his first year as High Commissioner in London.

The 5th of December, 2011 marked one year since His Excellency Garvin Nicholas assumed as High Commissioner at the London based High Commission.

By far the busiest of all Trinidad and Tobago Missions, the London Mission regularly hosts His Excellency the President, the Honourable Prime Minister, the Honourable Chief Justice, Cabinet Ministers and other senior officers.

In his first twelve months, His Excellency has sought to transform the image of the London Mission to a more dynamic, progressive mechanism for Diaspora activities involving culture, tourism and trade. There has been a fervent buzz of activities with nationals,

book launches, film nights, art exhibitions, trade conferences, Eid, Divali, Arrival Day celebrations and many other ceremonies hosted by this High Commission to the delight of citizens.

Monthly meetings with nationals afford this office and staff the opportunity to progressively engage with individuals in the community and develop relationships that shorten the bridge between Trinidad and Tobago and the UK. His Excellency has been explicit in his actions to ensure that nationals visiting the Mission feel at home and leave with undoubted pride.

A new professional website along with social media tools welcome

visitors from all around the world and further enhances the mission's outward communication with nationals far and wide.

External to the High Commission's core duty to its nationals, His Excellency Garvin Nicholas has embarked on a journey to enrich and place Trinidad and Tobago in good stead in the realm of trade and investment. So far, through successful initiatives, His Excellency has harnessed the prospect to yield over 2.5 billion dollars in direct foreign investment with the potential of creating over 150 new jobs.

His Excellency has marketed Trinidad and Tobago brands such as Angostura, Vat 19, KC

Confectionary, Caribbean Airlines and others at every opportunity. He was able to put the steel pan and Angostura rum on the global centre stage when they were presented as gifts at the royal wedding of William and Kate; a media frenzy event witnessed the world over.

As High Commissioner for the Commonwealth and representative for the Chair in Office during this period, High Commissioner was very influential in putting initiatives beneficial to the Caribbean and other Small States, on the CARICOM agenda for the 2011 CHOGM whilst also standing up to larger States preventing initiatives that might have been detrimental to the interests of Trinidad and Tobago. High Commissioner Nicholas has also been elected to Chair the Commonwealth Foundation Grants' Committee.

Trinidad and Tobago's presence in the UK has been additionally enhanced by the formation of a powerful and influential All Party Parliamentary Group for Trinidad and Tobago; another initiative of His Excellency Nicholas.

With advancing relations high on his agenda, His Excellency has met with non-traditional States such as the Kingdom of Morocco. Because of his efforts citizens wishing to travel to Morocco need only submit their application details via the London Mission to the Moroccan Embassy in London for processing.

His Excellency has put the Trinidad and Tobago stamp back into pan and carnival. The Ipswich Arts Festival saw the benefit of the High Commissioner's patronage as record numbers were exposed to steel pan and a cohort of 'Trinbagonian' revellers basking in cultural delight. He also hosted the 2011 launch of the 'Nottinghill Carnival' at his official residence and incorporated many cultural themes in his reception for London based Diplomats for Independence.

His Excellency has brought even more sustainable, economy diversifying projects to the fold in the form of sport tourism. About to be put in place is a bilateral agreement for an international golf tournament in Trinidad and Tobago.

Over the next twelve months, His Excellency expects to see the realisation of a Trinidad and Tobago styled Carnival in Cardiff Wales along with the presentation of Trinidad and Tobago's culture, fashion, cuisine and other trade opportunities at a five week long Trinidad and Tobago Village during the 2012 Olympics in London.

High Commissioner Nicholas will use every opportunity to take full advantage of Trinidad and Tobago's 50th anniversary celebrations in 2012 to promote the exciting trade and tourism destination that is Trinidad and Tobago.

High Commissioner Nicholas has become the virtual MP for the UK but states that if there is one drawback to his posting, it is the fact that he cannot represent the 'eight thousand and more' members of his constituency in Trinidad that voted for him at the 2010 general election.

Nevertheless, Trinidad and Tobago in London has indeed come a long way in the last twelve months!



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PRIME MINISTER KAMLA PERSAD-BISSESSAR AT THE COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING (CHOGM) 2011 IN PERTH, AUSTRALIA



Prime Minister of Australia the Hon. Julia Gillard welcomes Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago the Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar to Australia

The Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and outgoing Chair in Office of the Commonwealth, and the Honourable Julia Gillard, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia and incoming Chair in Office of the Commonwealth, held talks on 25 October 2011 in Perth Australia. The Prime Ministers welcomed the opportunity to exchange views on a range of important international and bilateral issues.

Both Prime Ministers acknowledged the great friendship between Australia and Trinidad and Tobago underpinned by shared membership of the Commonwealth and the UN, newly established links through the Caribbean Community, CARICOM, as well as long-standing ties and mutual respect established

through cricket over the years. The two leaders looked forward to further strengthening of bilateral relations.

In recognising the strength of Trinidad and Tobago's economy and its success in becoming a major regional financial centre, the two leaders appreciated a vibrant and growing bilateral trade and investment relationship. Trinidad and Tobago is currently Australia's largest trading partner in the Caribbean and has attracted significant investment by BHP Billiton (a global mining, oil and gas company headquartered in Melbourne). Prime Minister Gillard highlighted the gained momentum in relations generated through the opening of Australia's High Commission in Port of Spain and implementation of the Australia-CARICOM Memorandum of

Understanding.

Both Prime Ministers noted the progress by members of the United Nations towards an Arms Trade Treaty and committed to continue to work together to conclude the treaty in 2012. Evidence of the absence of agreed international standards on trade in conventional arms is a contributing factor to conflict and crime, undermining the peace and development of many countries. The two leaders expressed confidence that their governments' joint cooperation on the January 2011 arms control workshop in Trinidad and Tobago had built further support for the treaty in the region. This confirmed their support for future collaboration during the upcoming March 2012 CARICOM regional workshop in Trinidad and Tobago.

Prime Minister Gillard pointed out the influential and constructive role Trinidad and Tobago played as Chair in Office of the Commonwealth and as the previous host of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. Prime Minister Persad-Bissessar congratulated Prime Minister Gillard and expressed confidence that CHOGM 2011 would be successful in taking forward issues of concern to the Commonwealth. The Prime Ministers agreed that a commitment to recommendations in the Eminent Persons Group report commissioned in Trinidad and Tobago would be an important legacy for both countries.

As the past and incoming chairs of the Office of the Commonwealth, the Prime Ministers committed to working together to further strengthen the Commonwealth and to deliver major outcomes on issues such as food security, natural resource management, remittances and climate change. The two leaders considered it important that any such outcomes should meet the needs of small states.

They both recognised that this is the critical decade for action to tackle climate change. Prime Minister Persad-Bissessar commended Australia's Clean Energy Future package as an important demonstration of how a country can play its full and fair part in the global climate effort while maintaining strong economic growth and providing new opportunities for business. Prime Minister Gillard welcomed Trinidad

and Tobago's engagement in the work of the Global Carbon Capture and Storage Institute to accelerate



Prime Minister of Australia the Hon. Julia Gillard tries her hand at the steelpan which was presented to her as a gift by Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar at the Duxton Hotel on October 25, 2011

reduce carbon pollution. The two leaders agreed on the importance of access to broad and well-functioning international carbon markets in assisting countries to commit to, and achieve, ambitious mitigation objectives.

The Prime Ministers emphasised the importance of prioritising the poorest and most vulnerable countries for assistance in adapting to the impacts of climate change. In this regard, they affirmed their commitment to ensuring the voice of small island developing states is heard at the UN climate change conference in Durban. The two leaders called on that meeting to take concrete steps toward the new global climate regime by taking forward the Cancun Agreements.

The two leaders acknowledged the work of Commonwealth Health Ministers to promote the outcomes of the United Nations High Level Meeting on non communicable diseases (NCDs) and the leading role played by members of the Caribbean Community in driving global momentum and action to address NCDs. Both believed that governments must continue to emphasise strategies aimed at the individual, the family and the community in order to prevent and control rising rates of NCDs.

Prime Minister Gillard updated Prime Minister Persad-Bissessar on discussions leading up to the Cannes G20 Summit in November 2011 and leaders agreed on the importance of ensuring that Commonwealth countries have their voices heard by G20 leaders.

Prime Minister Gillard applauded Prime Minister Persad-Bissessar's tireless advocacy of women's empowerment and political participation. The Prime Ministers agreed to work together to encourage all leaders yet to do so to sign the Joint Statement On Advancing Women's Political Participation at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Perth. The Prime Ministers committed to promote women in political leadership as an important issue in both the Pacific and Caribbean regions. A visit to Trinidad and Tobago in 2012 by Australia's Global Ambassador for Women and Girls, Ms Penny Williams, will be a welcome opportunity for further cooperation.



The Fund was Created and established in November 2010 by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, the Children's Life Fund's aegis is to provide urgent relief for children, assisting those who live in the shadow of disease and illness. The Fund has also received support from the renewed charity medical Schriners Children's Hospital. In addition, all Cabinet Ministers and Members of Parliament contribute 5% of their salary to the Fund.

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TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AND BGTT COMMIT TO FUTURE GROWTH

The Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs the Honourable Kevin Ramnarine and High Commissioner Garvin Nicholas met with Mr. Martin Houston, Chief Operating Officer and Executive Director, BG Group, on Thursday 17 November 2011 at BG headquarters in London.

The meeting touched on a number of topics dealing with the gas and energy sector in Trinidad and Tobago.

Also present at the meeting were Mr Derek Hudson, President BGTT, Mr. Selwyn Lashley, Director, LNG & Gas Exports and Mr. Richard Jeremie, Senior Energy Analyst, LNG and Gas Exports Division, Ministry of Energy.

BGTT is a key gas producer in Trinidad and Tobago and has been operating in the country since 1989. The company has reinforced its position in the country and the rest of the world. BGTT supplies gas to Trinidad and Tobago, Atlantic LNG with around two thirds of production being exported as LNG.

At the meeting, BGTT reiterated its commitment to its future in Trinidad and Tobago. The natural gas industry will continue to grow and is expected to be the fastest



Photos: Darrin des Vignes

(above) High Commissioner Garvin Nicholas (2nd from left) and The Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs the Honourable Kevin Ramnarine (2nd from right) meet with Mr. Martin Houston, Chief Operating Officer and Executive Director, BG Group (3rd from right) Mr Derek Hudson, President BGTT, Mr. Selwyn Lashley, Director, LNG & Gas Exports and Mr. Richard Jeremie, Senior Energy Analyst, LNG and Gas Exports Division, Ministry of Energy.

growing fossil fuel for the next decade with exploration success expected. This is definitely good news for Trinidad and Tobago.

Other topics discussed at the meeting included the impact of climate change and its importance in Trinidad and Tobago. BGTT places huge importance on environmental management

and working with communities for sustainable planning and development.

Both Minister Kevin Ramnarine and High Commissioner Garvin Nicholas expressed the desire to work towards a prosperous future using energy efficiently.



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The Tourism Development Company Limited (TDC) is a state enterprise of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, mandated to develop and market Trinidad and Tobago's tourism product and improve the local tourism sector.

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TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO SHINES AT WORLD TRAVEL MARKET

The Trinidad and Tobago's booth at World Travel Market was truly representational with distinguished guests, sportsmen, beauty queens and others on Wednesday 09 November 2011 at the Excel Centre in London, for Trinidad and Tobago's VIP launch reception.

The High Commission was represented by His Excellency Garvin Nicholas, High Commissioner and staff.



High Commissioner Garvin Nicholas with cricketer Brian Lara, fashion designer Anya Ayoung-Chee and footballer Dwight Yorke at the World travel Market 2011 in London's Excel Centre.

Photo: Darrin des Vignes

World Travel Market (WTM) is the leading global event for the travel industry to meet, network, negotiate, showcase and conduct business. It is an event where Tourist Boards, Airlines, Hotels, Online Travel among others, are all gathered to share ideas and provide opportunities for workers in the industry. There were over eight thousand industry specialists present at the WTM.

The event normally lasts four days and last year's event was held from 7th – 10th November 2011.

At the event there was the formidable presence of two of the

greatest sportsmen produced by Trinidad and Tobago in the form of Dr. Brian Lara and Mr. Dwight Yorke along with the winner of America's Project Runway Series 9, Ms. Anya Ayoung-Chee.

Dr. The Hon. Rupert Griffith, Minister of Tourism and staff of the Ministry of Tourism formed the delegation to the World Travel Market.

High Commissioner Garvin Nicholas held a number of interviews with attendees at the Event which included persons involved in sports tourism and Caribbean lifestyle. Sports tourism is one of the areas

that High Commissioner Nicholas is promoting in the United Kingdom and sees benefits to Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean as a whole. Sports tourism will bring additional benefits to the Trinidad and Tobago economy and he has said that 'we already have the infrastructure for this and the potential, and Trinidad and Tobago must diversify and offer more than the traditional sand, sea and sun'.

The evening ended with a street parade that, as High Commissioner Garvin Nicholas commented, could rival Nottinghill Carnival anyday'.

EU TOURISM AWARD 'AN INCENTIVE' FOR TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Trinidad Guardian December, 2011

A new award for tourism given to Trinidad and Tobago was meant as an incentive to encourage tourism claims vice-president of the Trinidad and Tobago Hotels, Restaurants and Tourism Association Kevin Kenny.

A luncheon to celebrate the country's World's Best Tourist Destination 2012 award was held at the Hyatt Regency (Trinidad) hotel in Port of Spain.

The event was hosted by Tourism Minister Dr. The Honourable Rupert Griffith, following an award presentation to the Minister, by representatives of the European Council on Trade and Tourism (ECTT) .

According to the ECTT's website, the main objectives include "promoting non-EU countries as attractive and safe tourist destinations; assisting non-EU national tourism organisations to exchange knowledge and work collaboratively; providing industry partners and other interested parties with easy access to research and statistics regarding outgoing tourism from the European Union".

Budgeting for ECTT is financed by members' contributions and with additional financial support for specific campaigns raised overseas.

THE TOURISM PRODUCT NEEDS TO BE NURTURED SO CARIBBEAN ECONOMIES CAN GROW

www.caribbean-council.org

The Caribbean Market Place, the Caribbean Hotels and Tourism Association's (CHTA) premier annual business event will take place in Nassau, Bahamas. This very large gathering brings together the industry in the region with those internationally who buy and sell the region's tourism product: the tour operators, airlines, cruise companies and the sector's allied industries.

The occasion, which is attended by the region's tourism Ministers and includes meetings of the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO), additionally offers the industry in the Caribbean the opportunity to take stock of the challenges that it faces.

Both the location in Nassau and the economic background against which this year's event takes place, emphasise the changing nature of the industry, its centrality to the Caribbean's future economic fortunes, and the effect that the global economic downturn is having on traditional markets.

Caribbean tourism is now a long way from its origins. From an industry originally run by gifted amateurs and mavericks it is now a hugely important professional activity at the centre of the Caribbean economy which, irrespective of the aversion that some international financial institutions and non-governmental organisations have to it, now plays a vital role in Caribbean economic development.

In the Bahamas the Government from the Prime Minister down, the media, the unions and the private sector all understand this and accept tourism's centrality to the islands' economic survival. As a consequence tourism has for a long time now been a matter

about which virtually every member of the Bahamas Cabinet and opposition has a positive view.

Until relatively recently this could not be said about much of the rest of the region despite the fact that tourism, its allied services and its ever increasing demand-shadow now lie at, or close to, the centre of the modern Caribbean economy in all but a very few nations.

Thankfully more nations have in the last few years come to realise that tourism, unlike any other form of investment, can turn economies around rapidly and in real time; provides a non-national source of income to support social commitments at hopefully

A further interesting example of a nation that has fully recognised the dynamic role tourism has in underwriting growth is Cuba. There, very senior members its government unconnected with the industry speak positively about the central economic contribution they intend the industry making as it moves upmarket and Government encourages investors to locate facilities in newly created development zones.

The key as Barbados, Cuba, Jamaica, Aruba and others in the region have found is that the Caribbean has to make tourism sustainable, professionally run and monitored if nations are to be able to compete globally.



realistic levels of taxation; and has a wider cash impact that can benefit everyone from the farmer producing eggs to the accountant or junior physician.

In an approach that ought to be more common among financial institutions across the region, the Barbados Central Bank Economic Review in December provided a detailed focus on the tourism industry. This identified trends in visitor spending and highlighted the impact of the global recession on spending by visitors from the United Kingdom, the island's largest source market. The Review also contained a useful study estimating the average length of stay of visitors over a seven year period, an approach central to determining how much the tourism sector contributed to GDP and by extension its long term role in the economy.

This is an important step forward from the sometimes grudging support given by some Governments across the region to an industry that parts of the public sector and academia still seem unwilling to accept.

Having said this it is clear that 2012 will not be an easy year for the industry.

Despite the continuing view that a regional perspective is required on marketing the Caribbean tourism product, the likelihood is that 2012 will see greater competition between Caribbean destinations. This is because the ever-increasing need to cut public expenditure means that self-interest will continue to reign.

The fall off in visitor arrivals from Europe in destinations like Barbados and St Lucia is likely to continue. This will mean that significantly more will have to be spent on UK marketing and on competing in markets like Canada and the US against all other regional destinations. This will include Caribbean nations like

►► Cuba which is forecasting an 8.2 per cent growth in 2012 and the Dominican Republic which like its Hispanic counterpart is trying to move upscale rapidly.

Caribbean destinations dependent on Europe and the lower end of the US market will have to move their offering upscale as lower end travellers from Europe abandon then region for a few years and select nearer warm-water destinations or like lower end US visitors choose to vacation nationally, or shift to cruises or all-inclusives where they feel better able to control their spend.

Developing campaigns in new source markets will be a new focus. The rapidly growing disposable income of citizens in Brazil, Russia, China, Argentina and other non traditional markets will offer alternatives and new sources of income develop, especially as airlift making use of gateways such as

Panama and Mexico City come on stream.

Airlift will remain critical and Governments will find themselves locked into providing significant and more complex levels of support to retain traditional full-service carriers who depend on a specific mix of fares across the plane. Increasing levels of taxation on air travel for environmental or other reasons may further reduce air services from Europe.

Locally owned smaller hotels will continue to discount, sadly to their longer term detriment. This will continue to eat into their profits and their ability to upgrade properties in contrast to the bigger brands and chains that have emerged in the region and are better equipped to discount and market globally.

Space does not permit more, but it is clear that the competition from global destinations will become

fiercer as Governments everywhere recognise the power of tourism to rapidly turn economies around.

Since the start of the twenty first century the industry in the region has undergone structural change, the implications of which have not fully been acknowledged.

This is not because the region is any less attractive as a destination, but because not enough attention has been paid to the need to adapt tourism's offering and approach to ensure that the industry in the Caribbean remains competitive and sustainable.

The tourism sector needs to be nurtured: without it the Caribbean economy cannot grow.

David Jessop is the Director of the Caribbean Council and can be contacted at david.jessop@caribbean-council.org

Previous columns can be found at www.caribbean-council.org

THE COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES LEAGUE'S FAIR 2011

On Saturday 13th November, 2011, The Commonwealth Countries League's (CCL) annual Fair was held at Kensington Town Hall, London. Thirty seven Commonwealth countries took part, in addition to a number of related Commonwealth and private organisations, showcased their art, culture and culinary.

The Trinidad and Tobago booth promoted and sold many of the local products such as Angostura aromatic bitters and 1919 rum, Diana Candy Co. sweets, Lion Brand split peas powder and baking powder and Matouks pepper hot sauce and green seasoning. The Trinidad and Tobago stall also had a number of local dishes which included roti and pelau. These dishes proved a favourite with the crowd and were sold out very quickly.

At the event dignitaries in attendance included H.E. Garvin Nicholas, High Commissioner for the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and his spouse Dr. Nicola Alcala, Baroness Boothroyd OM., P.C. Patron of the CCL, The Worshipful, The Mayor of Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Councillor Julie Mills and consort, the Spouse of Prime Minister of Malta, Mrs. Catherine Gonzi, escorted by H.E. Joseph Zammit Tabona, High Commissioner of Malta and his spouse Mrs. Susan Zammit Tabona.



(above) The Mayor of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Councillor Julie Mills and spouse with Trinidad and Tobago team.



(pictured) L-R: Spouse of H.E. Garvin Nicholas, Dr. Nicola Alcala, H.E. Garvin Nicholas, Beverley Awonaya, Public Affairs and Ms. Wendy-Ann Austin, Financial Attaché preparing rotis for patrons at The Fair.

HIGH COMMISSIONER CELEBRATES EID-UL-FITR WITH NATIONALS IN LONDON

On Saturday 17 September, 2011, the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission in London hosted its Annual Eid-ul-Fitr Celebration.

His Excellency Garvin Nicholas, High Commissioner for the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago read the President's Eid-ul-Fitr message to nationals present.

Master of ceremonies for the evening was Dr. Ozair Hasnain. The opening prayer was given by Haji Azzam Mohammed with verses from Al Quran read by Mr. Adam Mohammed.

Mrs Asela Ibrahim-El Morsy JP LLB gave the feature address and Ms. Zaira Safiya Mohammed closed with the vote of thanks.

After the formal segment of the celebration, nationals enjoyed traditional cuisine for the occasion and spoke with His Excellency Garvin Nicholas on various topics including the work that he is doing in the United Kingdom.



L-R: Master of ceremonies, Dr Ozair Hasnain, Mr. Adam Mohammed, High Commissioner Garvin Nicholas, Ms Zaira Safiya Mohammed, Mrs Asela Ibrahim-El Morsy JP LLB, and Haji Azzam Mohammed

DIVALI CELEBRATIONS AT THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO HIGH COMMISSION, LONDON

The Trinidad and Tobago High Commission, London held its Divali celebrations on Saturday 29th October 2011.

The event was well attended by members of the Diaspora. Mrs Beverley Awonaya, Public Affairs, Culture and Tourism welcomed nationals to the High Commission. She delivered a short message on behalf of His Excellency Garvin Nicholas who was away on duty at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Australia.

The President's Message was read by the Acting High Commissioner, Mrs Reshma Bissoon-Deokie. The message was followed by the lighting of the deyas by children. This symbolic act of lighting the deyas signified the essence of Divali and one of the world's most universally-held beliefs – that of light conquering darkness or good conquering evil.

The featured address on the evening was delivered by Mr. Narinesingh Lal, Immigration Attaché at the High Commission. In his delivery, Mr Lal placed emphasis on the significance of Divali listing the three events concerning the celebration of Divali, as occurs in Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean. The first being the emergence of Mother Lakshmi from the churning of the ocean, the second being the return



Divali Celebrations being held in the Reception room at the High Commission. Prominent figures in the community can be seen performing the Bhajan above.

of Lord Rama to Ayodha after defending King Ravana in Lakha and the third being the observance of a New Year for Hindus.

There was also the singing of Bhajans by nationals in the community.

A traditional East Indian dinner followed the formal part of the evening.

H.E. GARVIN NICHOLAS PRESENTS CREDENTIALS TO H.M. QUEEN MARGRETHE II

Trinidad and Tobago's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark, His Excellency Garvin Nicholas, presented his Credentials to Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II on Friday November 25th, 2011 at the Amalienborg Palace, Denmark.

His Excellency Garvin Nicholas' visit to the Kingdom of Denmark occurred over the period November 23rd to 27th, 2011.

Ambassador Nicholas also held a number of high level meetings with prominent businessmen in Denmark in which a number of issues were raised and discussed.

During his visit to Denmark Ambassador Nicholas hosted a dinner for members of the Trinidad and Tobago Diaspora living in Copenhagen.

Members of the Diaspora were exceptionally pleased to meet with the new Ambassador and took the opportunity to provide insight into their lives in Denmark. Their experiences have been extremely positive and while some members have been able to stay in touch, it was agreed that there was need to re-energise the community.

Ambassador Nicholas invited the members of the Diaspora to contact him on issues, despite

the fact that he was not resident in Copenhagen. He expressed the hope that there would be future occasions to visit Copenhagen and that he would welcome the opportunity to meet with members of the Diaspora on those occasions.



L-R: H.E. Garvin Nicholas and spouse of H.E. Garvin Nicholas, Dr. Nicola Alcala at the Amalienborg Palace, Denmark

BOOK LAUNCH - ISABELLA'S LEGACY by Ron Ramdin - November, 2011

In 1492, what had only months before seemed an unlikely event, actually took place in Seville. Through the cobbled streets, Christopher Columbus on his triumphant return after his first voyage to the 'Indies,' paraded seven exotic-looking Indians who were accompanied by equally strange-looking green and yellow parrots. Imagine the confusion in the minds of these Indians as they walked through the city and the curiosity this spectacle had aroused among the people of Seville for at this time, Europeans knew little about the people of Africa and Asia, except through what they had read from the travel literature of the 15th century. We should remember however that



L-R: Mrs. Beverley Awonaya, Public Affairs, Mr. Ron Ramdin, Mr. Rudolph Walker, Dr. Margaret Busby, and Dr. Clem Seebarran

Photo: Darrin des Vignes

►► **these 'Indians' were not from India, the place which Columbus had set out to discover and mistakenly believed he had reached.**

Fast forward almost five centuries to 1990 when I (the Grandson of an indentured labourer from India who had travelled to the West Indies to work on the sugar plantations) walked the streets of Seville on my way to deliver a Lecture at the University of Seville entitled: 'Towards 1992: Discovery... and Minorities in Europe.' I was born in Trinidad which was 'discovered' by Columbus on his third voyage to the New World, but I could not speak Spanish. Why? Therein lies a tale of the connection between language and Empire. Spanish Trinidad gave way to British Trinidad and so I migrated to the 'Mother Country,' as Britain was known. But as I became more knowledgeable about Queen Isabella, Columbus, Las Casas, Seville and Granada, I realised I was only partially educated for Britain and Spain were both important.

My first visit the year before my Lecture, had set in train, a growing desire to see and learn more about Spain. Thereafter, the idea of writing Isabella's Legacy emerged, took hold and propelled me to travel through Andalusia and later to Catalunya. Isabella's Legacy is a unique book, a rare interweaving of travel, memoir, history, cultures and identities; a journey of surprises - stunning impressions, a meditation on world history and significantly on contemporary Europe. Above all, it is a narrative not only of my discovery of Spain which, in turn, has led to self-discovery, but also a book which will hopefully enlighten and enchant the reader.

Isabella's Legacy will be followed by the publication of Ron Ramdin's extraordinary autobiography *Turning Pages*.

Ron Ramdin, historian, biographer and novelist, and now travel writer, offers this candid, intimate and honest portrait of his travels in Spain. Following in the wake

of Christopher Columbus, it is a voyage of discovery, a painstaking and insightful search for cultural roots that raises questions about cultural belonging and the effects of colonisation. It is also a tale of how personal friendships, chance meetings and casual acquaintances help the writer to explore and appreciate the land he so desired to know. Although the direct object of Ramdin's musings is modern Spain (mainly Andalusia), his Trinidadian origins provide the anchor point and the historical pointers that help him to navigate large geographical expanses and over five hundred years of history. If Columbus failed to discover India, Isabella's Legacy shows how a Caribbean West Indian was able to make his travels to Spain into a personal adventure that would help to shed light on the Columbus inheritance.

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H.E. GARVIN NICHOLAS GIVES THE LONDON DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY A TRUE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO CHRISTMAS

His Excellency Garvin Nicholas hosted members of the Diplomatic Corps to a Trinbagonian type Christmas reception at his Residence on Saturday 10th December 2011.

H.E. Garvin Nicholas used the occasion to say thank you to the many diplomats, officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and other international organisations who played a part in making his first year as Trinidad and Tobago's representative to the Court of St James, a truly memorable and successful one.

Guests were treated to delicious food and lively entertainment. There was live Parang and Steelpan music on the night. Entertainment for the event was provided by Los

Paranderos de Londres. The infectious sounds of the parang music were very appreciated by the invitees who, in many cases, did not know about Parang music. A medley of parang classics were played by the band. Music was also provided by a DJ.

Guests were also treated to a mouth watering selection of traditional Christmas dishes which included pastelles, stewed pigeon

peas, Spanish rice, ginger beer, sorrel drink and ponche de crème.

High Commissioner Garvin Nicholas held the event to also showcase the variety of Trinidad and Tobago cuisine served in



(pictured) Los Paranderos de Londres in playing parang music at the Christmas reception at the High Commissioners residence.

Trinbagonian homes on Christmas Day and throughout the festive season of Christmas.

This event also gave a taste of things to come in 2012 at the Trinidad and Tobago Village which will host a number of events to highlight the culture and cuisine of Trinidad and Tobago.

(pictured) H.E. Garvin Nicholas and attendees at the Christmas reception



ANNUAL STUDENTS CHRISTMAS PARTY

The High Commission hosted its Annual Students' Christmas Reception on Friday 9th December 2011. Of the two hundred students currently registered with the High Commission, the majority of whom are on government scholarships, approximately one hundred were able to attend the reception.

The students were welcomed to the event by the Second Secretary, Ms. Nickesha Smith, officer in charge of Student Affairs who then introduced High Commissioner, H.E. Garvin Nicholas. The High Commissioner took the opportunity to let the students know that High Commission was here to provide support for them. He encouraged them to contact the High Commission for assistance with any issues that they may have. The High Commissioner commended the students for promoting Trinidad and Tobago at their various institutions and encouraged them to continue doing so.

An entertaining evening followed with karaoke, and games. The students were able to socialize with each other, meet members of staff and interact with the High Commissioner.

Students were also treated to customary "Trini" Christmas dishes including Pastelles, Ham, Pelau, Roti, Curry, Black cake and Sorrel Drink. The event was enjoyed immensely by all present.

The High Commission was pleased with the number of students who were able to attend and continues to encourage all nationals currently studying in the United Kingdom to register with the mission. Forms can be found on our website at <http://www.tthighcommission.co.uk/index.php/downloads/forms>.



(above) a cross section of some of students who attended Annual Students' Christmas Party.



(above) H.E. Garvin Nicholas greeting some of students who attended the Annual Students' Christmas Party.

ANNUAL NATIONALS' CHRISTMAS PARTY

On the 14th December 2011, the Annual Nationals' Christmas Party was held at the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission, London (TTHC). The event was well attended by a large number of nationals residing in London and the surrounding areas. The nationals were delighted to have in attendance at the event H.E. Garvin Nicholas, High Commissioner with spouse Dr. Nicola Alcala and TTHC staff members.

There was a lovely Christmas spread provided by the nationals themselves which included pastelles, ham, pelau, roti, curry, pholourie, fried bake and acra and black cake.

The nationals were entertained by keyboardist Mr. Neil Suepaul who played many holiday classics from different genres. They later enjoyed themselves in true 'Trini' style as they took to the dance floor.



L-R: Nationals enjoying the lovely Christmas spread prepared at the Nationals' Christmas party held at TTHC.

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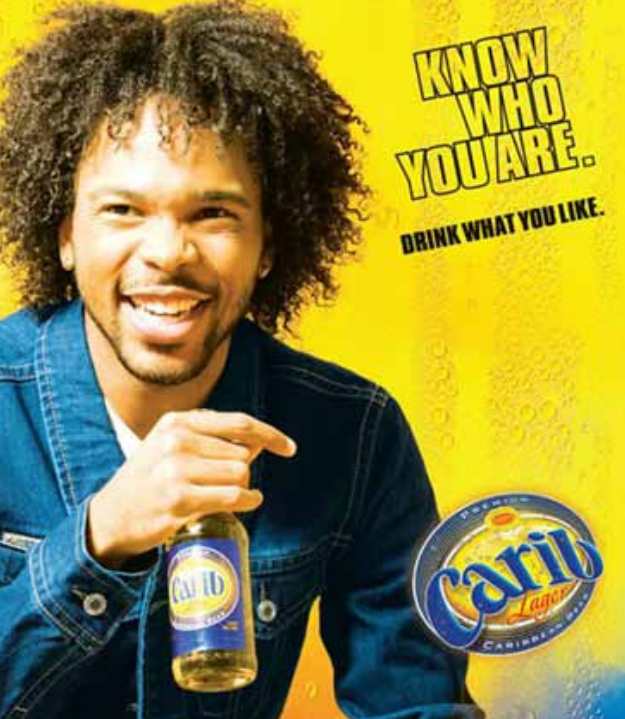
The Trinidad and Tobago High Commission has a new website.
www.tthighcommission.co.uk

To get the latest updates and invitations for upcoming events. Please feel free to **register online**
www.tthighcommission.co.uk/index.php/downloads/online-form

Alternatively, **collect and fill in** the nationals' registration form at the High Commission.

KNOW WHO YOU ARE.

DRINK WHAT YOU LIKE.





(pictured) The Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Prime Minister shakes hands with the son of Mr. Marlon Choo Ying, whilst in the background Ms. Claudia Cupid, Narinesingh Lal, Immigration Attaché and Michael Graham of the TTHC look on.



L-R: The Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Prime Minister greeting invited guests at a reception at the High Commissioner's residence in honour of the Prime Minister.



(pictured) The Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Prime Minister and H.E. Garvin Nicholas with invited guests at a reception at the High Commissioner's residence in honour of the Prime Minister



L-R: Mrs. Beverley Awonaya, Public Affairs, Mr. Lawson Bernard, fashion designer Ms. Anya Ayoung-Chee, Mr. Bevon Garcia and Spouse of H.E. Garvin Nicholas, Dr. Nicola Alcala at the World Travel Market 2011 in London's Excel Centre.



(above) Some of students formed impromptu bands to sing karaoke at the Annual Students' Christmas Party



L-R: Ms. Nickesha Smith, Second Secretary and Mrs. Romaine Maharaj presenting a doorprize to one of the lucky students at the Annual Students' Christmas Party